

PRESS RELEASE

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CONYERS CALLS ON CONGRESS AND ADMINISTRATION TO DECLARE GENOCIDE IN DARFUR, SUDAN

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee and Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus, issued the following statement today regarding the situation in Sudan:

“Today, I am pleased to join my friends in the Senate, Senator Sam Brownback and Senator Jon Corzine, along with my many friends from the House, in supporting the introduction of Congressman Donald Payne’s resolution declaring genocide in Darfur, Sudan. I commend them all, along with Congressman Frank Wolf and the Congressional Black Caucus for their hard and persistent work to raise attention to the catastrophe that is occurring in Sudan.

Every day the news reports convey a worsening situation where bombings, killings and rapes continue. One million lives are now at risk of death by starvation and dehydration. One to two hundred people are dying every day and that rate could rise to four hundred a day by fall. The most vulnerable people who successfully escaped the violence - children, women and the physically infirm - are the first victims in the harsh desert environment.

We cannot be idle while another genocide occurs. We cannot tread through the slow path of diplomatic discussions and debates while tens of thousands die in a political conflict. We saw the result of our failure to quickly respond in Rwanda. We have learned lessons from the Holocaust, Cambodia, and Uganda.

Congress and the Administration must immediately take further steps to save lives and quell the attacks by the Janjaweed militants and the Sudanese government. I believe that the U.S. must push the U.N. Security Council to act immediately. The Security Council must pass legislation to pressure the wrongdoers, enhance the monitoring forces and authorize a military response, if necessary. We must use all of our global leadership to bring nations together to abate and solve the political crisis while addressing the humanitarian crisis before a million people are lost to our inaction.

This resolution is an important step in the right direction. Congress must stand up and declare this genocide now, while people can still be saved from a certain death if we do not act. Let’s not wait until one million people are dead. This resolution calls on the President to take a strong resolution to the U.N. that can end this needless bloodshed. I call on the leadership of the House and Senate to ensure its speedy passage. I pray the President will exercise American leadership on the Security Council now. There is no better time to act and this time, we do not want say that we waited too long.”

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